

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend the specification as follows.

Page 1, the second full paragraph, lines 8-22, should read as follows:

In a charged particle beam exposure apparatus, such as an electron beam exposure apparatus, which exposes an LSI pattern on the sample by using the charged particle beams, a multibeam exposure system using a plurality of the charged particle beams has been proposed for improving the processing capability (throughput) of the apparatus. As an example of the conventional art of the multibeam exposure system, a blanking aperture array system is cited (H. Yasuda, J. VAC. Sci&Tech. Technol., B14 (6), 1996). In this system, a blanking aperture array formed of a plurality of aperture groups is used, which has a blanking electrode capable of independent control of an applied voltage. An electron beam from a single electron source is divided into a plurality of electron beams, and turning on/off of each electron beam is controlled by the blanking electrode capable of independent control. Thus, a beam shape formed by the group of the electron beams that consist of a plurality of the electron beams can be arbitrarily set. Accordingly, the throughput of the apparatus

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is improved because the electron beam of any shape can be obtained.